

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-20. (Canceled)

21. (New) An image output system including a plurality of output apparatuses, and a controller connected to the output apparatuses for controlling image outputs of the output apparatuses, wherein the controller comprises:

reception means for receiving a print job; and

control means,

the control means confirming whether one of the output apparatuses is in a printable state, when a distribution operation is initiated;

the control means confirming, if some of the output apparatuses are in the printable state, whether the print job includes a setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper;

the control means regarding a plurality of page images as one group, if the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included,

the control means confirming whether the print job includes a setting for double-side printing,

the control means regarding two page images as one group, if the setting for double-side printing is included,

the control means distributing to-be-printed page images and estimating a time needed for the distributive printing, based on printing speeds of available output apparatuses, in units of groups, each group including a plurality of page images, if it is confirmed that the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included, or in units of groups of two page images if it is confirmed that the setting for double-side printing is included, or in units of page images if neither the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper, nor the setting for double-side printing is included.

22. (New) An image output system including a plurality of output apparatuses, and a controller connected to the output apparatuses for controlling image outputs of the output apparatuses, wherein the controller comprises:

reception means for receiving a print job; and

control means,

the control means confirming whether the staple-printing is set in the print job received by the reception means,

the control means confirming whether high-speed printing is set in the print job, if the staple-printing is set,

the control means assigning all page images to one of the output apparatuses in order to carry out the staple-printing, if the high-speed printing is not set,

the control means canceling the staple-printing if the high-speed printing is set, and distributing image outputs to one or more of the output apparatuses which are in a printable state.

23. (New) An image output method of outputting images using a plurality of output apparatuses connected via a network, comprising:

confirming whether one of the output apparatuses is in a printable state, when a distribution operation is initiated;

confirming, if some of the output apparatuses are in the printable state, whether the print job includes a setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper;

regarding a plurality of page images as one group, if the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included,

confirming whether the print job includes a setting for double-side printing,

regarding two page images as one group, if the setting for double-side printing is included,

distributing to-be-printed page images and estimating a time needed for the distributive printing, based on printing speeds of available output apparatuses, in units of groups, each group including a plurality of page images, if it is confirmed that the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included, or in units of groups of two

page images if it is confirmed that the setting for double-side printing is included, or in units of page images if neither the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper, nor the setting for double-side printing is included.

24. (New) An image output method of outputting images using a plurality of output apparatuses connected via a network, comprising:
conforming whether the staple-printing is set in a print job;
confirming whether high-speed printing is set in the print job, if the staple-printing is set,
assigning all page images to one of the output apparatuses in order to carry out the staple-printing, if the high-speed printing is not set,
canceling the staple-printing if the high-speed printing is set, and distributing image outputs to one or more of the output apparatuses which are in a printable state.

25. (New) An image output system including a plurality of output apparatuses, and a controller connected to the output apparatuses for controlling image outputs of the output apparatuses, wherein the controller comprises:
a scanner unit that receives a print job; and
a control unit,
the control unit configured to confirm whether one of the output apparatuses is in a printable state, when a distribution operation is initiated;
the control unit configured to confirm, if some of the output apparatuses are in the printable state, whether the print job includes a setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper;
the control unit configured to group a plurality of page images as one group, if the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included,
the control unit configured to confirm whether the print job includes a setting for double-side printing,
the control means unit configured to group two page images as one group, if the setting for double-side printing is included,

the control unit configured to distribute to-be-printed page images and estimate a time needed for the distributive printing, based on printing speeds of available output apparatuses, in units of groups, each group including a plurality of page images, if it is confirmed that the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper is included, or in units of groups of two page images if it is confirmed that the setting for double-side printing is included, or in units of page images if neither the setting for printing a plurality of page images on a sheet of paper, nor the setting for double-side printing is included.